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Breaking the Box @ America Online ■ Portfolio: The Changing Workplace ■ Creature Comforts in Wrightsville Beach ■ A Test Kitchen for Marcel



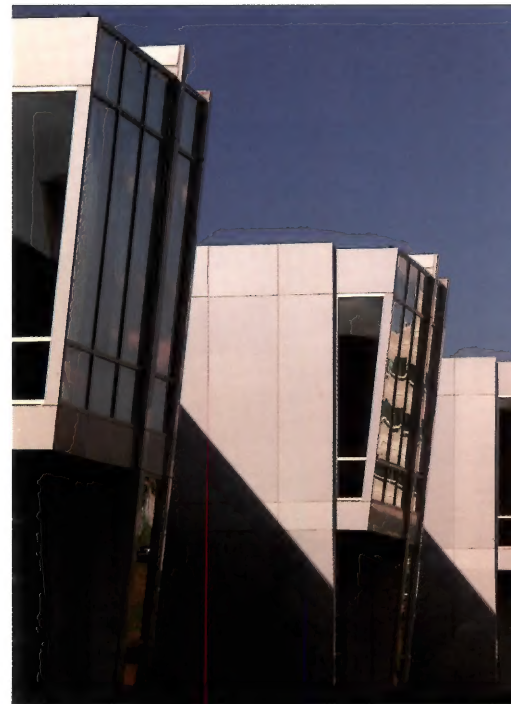


*An inspired warehouse renovation by Ai creates a dynamic office landscape, connects employees with the joys of daylight, and launches a string of new building projects at Internet giant America Online's northern Virginia headquarters campus.*

*By Ed Gunts*

**T**here's probably not a company in America that doesn't encourage its employees to "think outside the box." Now one of America's leading Internet providers, America Online, has collaborated with a regional architecture firm, Ai, to create a work setting that shows what can happen when employers actually heed their own advice.

The two-story workspace known as "Creative Center I" houses 650 employees of AOL, whose corporate headquarters is outside of Washington, D.C., in Dulles. But, instead of building the center from scratch, AOL and Ai took over an existing warehouse and broke it apart – literally – to create nontraditional office space for a technology-oriented workforce hired to create content for the online service's Internet channels.



**Conference "pods" break through the old walls and reach into the landscape.**



# Breaking the Box @ AOL



Photos: Prakash Patel

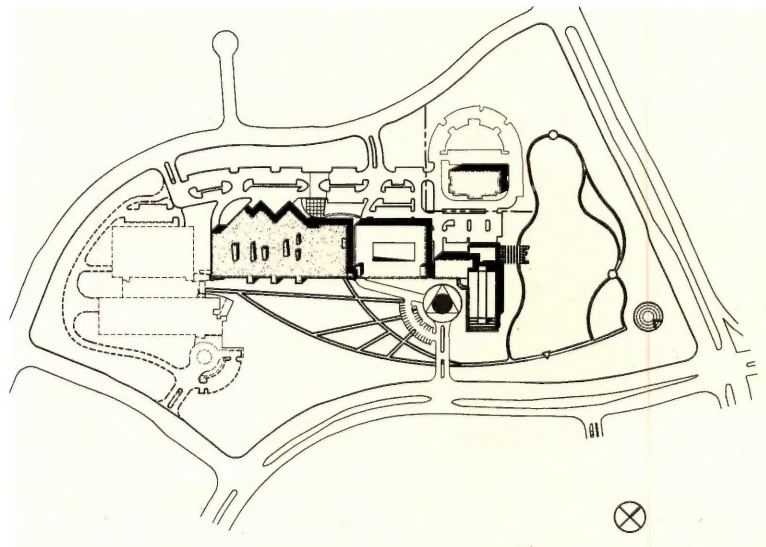
**The former parts warehouse – nearly 500 feet long and now enclosing 183,000 square feet of space – required clever interventions to give it a human scale.**

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The result is one of the most fluid and flexible work environments ever constructed for the high-tech industry – an idea factory for the 21st century. It's also a fitting symbol for the company itself – dynamic, vibrant, and loosely structured for creativity and productivity. "Everything we've done in the design stage and provided in the facility itself has been to help people understand you don't have to think in a box," says AOL vice president Faith Denault. "Creativity is good. Walls can tilt. Seating can be casual. Think. Think. Think. That's what AOL is all about."

Before moving to its new quarters in the Dulles corridor, AOL occupied buildings with private offices that limited interaction among its staff members. Company officials wanted the new space to break those barriers and foster a team atmosphere, said David Haresign, AIA, one of the Ai principals who headed the project. "This building is about transition. AOL was growing unbelievably fast. Its directors not only wanted flexibility, but an environment that could attract the caliber of professionals the company needs. They wanted a place that was open, high energy, conducive to the fast moving Internet industry."

The building's success hinged largely on the ability of Ai – which has offices in Washington and Richmond – to recycle the warehouse imaginatively and quickly. Timing was critical for AOL, which in less than 15 years has become a global leader in interactive communications and services, with nearly 7,500 employees and more than 15 million AOL and CompuServe members worldwide. By the mid-1990s, the company had more



**The 38-acre site has room to accommodate further growth.**



with light monitors that illuminate a series of two-story atriums. Equipped with movable furniture, marker boards, and PC connections, these atriums double as informal gathering spots for AOL staff. By placing the daylighted spaces next to service cores that contain pantries, restrooms, copy rooms, and stairs, Ai also mapped out identifiable landmarks within the massive space.

A byproduct of the architects' involvement was to give the building a name. Before work was completed, AOL officials referred to it simply as "the warehouse," fostering the perception among employees that it may not be as comfortable as a conventional office building. The architects decided the new look demanded a new name and christened the building Creative Center I. In the year since the facility opened, AOL has completed Creative Center II and plans are underway for centers III and IV.

Although the first creative center was designed with a high degree of flexibility, employees have a few quibbles with it. They say they miss the privacy of the offices they had in the previous buildings and that there aren't enough conference spaces in the new center. They also note that client-driven design efforts to encourage unstructured interaction among staff interfere with some workers' ability to concentrate at open workstations.

For the most part, though, AOL's Creative Center I has received high marks inside the company and out. Recognition for the center includes a variety of design

and construction awards, including 1998 Design Awards from the Virginia Society AIA and AIA/Northern Virginia. And, thanks in part to the new environment, AOL has been able to recruit the staff it needed during a time of explosive industry growth.

"We didn't want to warehouse people," asserts AOL's Faith Denault. "This really helped break down the barriers."

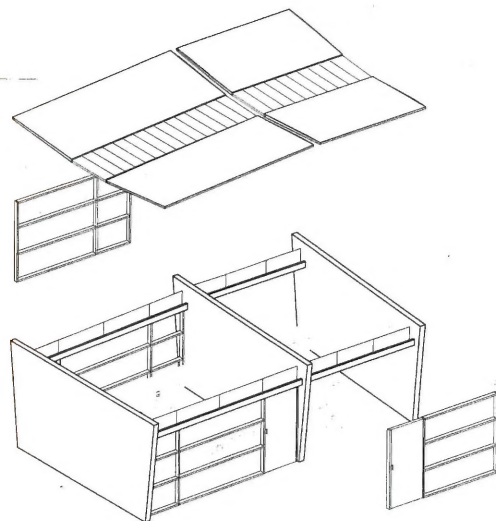
*Ed Guntz is the architecture critic of The Baltimore Sun.*

**Freestanding private offices are arranged in arcs that subdivide the large space (left). Their translucent glass walls allow light to enter but still offer privacy.**



**A free-form dropped ceiling gives definition to the visitors reception area.**





**Project:** America Online, Creative Center One  
**Architects:** Ai, Washington, D.C. (Rusty Meadows, David Haresign, J.P. Spickler, Holly Briggs, Dana Pomeroy, Alastair Reilly, Sybil Curley, Charles Plymale, Charles Roberts, Mike Devlin, Lynn Goldfarb, Jeffrey Gay, Kyle Mincey, Dan Zawadzki, project team)  
**Contractor:** Hitt Contracting, Inc.  
**Consultants:** APM Engineering (mechanical, electrical, plumbing); Wiles, Mensch Corporation (civil); Rathgeber/Goss Associates (structural); EDAW (landscape architecture)  
**Owner:** America Online Inc.

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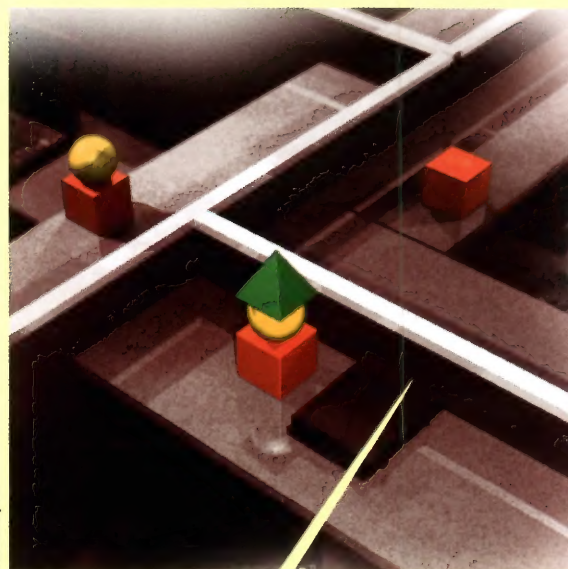
**Mezzanine level shares use of conference "pods" (left). Exploded view of offices shows flexible storefront system (above).**

## A Cure for Open-Office Interruptions?

It's the bane of anyone who works in an open office environment: colleagues come up and talk, even if you're busy. It's especially maddening if you sit near a main aisle or heavily used conference area. What's one to do? Some people resort to headphones to tune out the world or write on chalkboards to communicate when they're too tied up to chat. Others hang curtains. But now there's a better solution — Protoblocs.

Designed by Ai to alleviate the privacy concerns of the estimated 25 million office workers in America who lack office doors, Protoblocs are three foam shapes that send a subtle-but-clear message when interruptions are unwanted. Based on the communication protocol of a traffic signal, Protoblocs send a color-coded message. When displayed, the top shape, a green pyramid, signals it's OK to come in and interrupt, or that the work in progress is collaborative. Green invites participation. The middle shape, a yellow sphere, alerts coworkers to use caution when approaching. The bottom shape, a red cube, functions like a closed door.

"All the worker does is place the appropriate Protobloc prominently in the cubicle to let his or her wishes be known — without saying a word," says Julie Rayfield, an Ai spokesperson. "And these silent partners are light, soft, and even suitable as squeezable stress relief tools." Protoblocs cost \$14.95 a set, plus shipping. For information, contact Protoblocs at 877-229-2562 or by fax at 202-783-0413. — Ed Gunts



**Ai's partners designed Protoblocs in response to clients' privacy concerns.**





# Urban Renewal

Media General Headquarters • CMSS Architects

The trend for so many companies today is to bolt for the suburbs. But Richmond communications conglomerate Media General was not about to follow trends blindly. Committing itself to downtown Richmond, the company sent a clear message both to its readers and the city's business community that, indeed, the city is worthy of long-term investment.

Seeking to realign its operations by creating a corporate complex that would redevelop two city blocks straddling East Franklin Street, Media General identified the first phase of the project to be a 141,000-square-foot headquarters from which to run its collection of 15 newspapers, 14 broadcasting outlets, and two cable TV stations.

CMSS Architects of Virginia Beach was hired for the job and asked to design a facility large enough to accommodate the company's staff while maintaining the proportions of the low-rise historic buildings scattered along nearby blocks. The charge to the architects included implementation of an interior design program that would accommodate growth and technological change in the organization, anticipating such variables as new uses, floor layouts, and office configurations.

On its exterior, the new headquarters nods to the classical language of Richmond's historic architecture. The scale of the four-story building was reduced using devices such as engaged columns, a recessed entrance, a low cornice, eye-catching brackets, and a dark ribbon of precast concrete at street level.

Inspired by the grandeur of the nearby Capitol, the architects designed a dramatic rotunda lobby for the corporate headquarters that sets an uplifting tone. The lobby floor features white marble



A mixture of classically-inspired forms and Modern materials give the façade a pleasing richness (above). The building mass contributes responsibly to the urban fabric (top left).

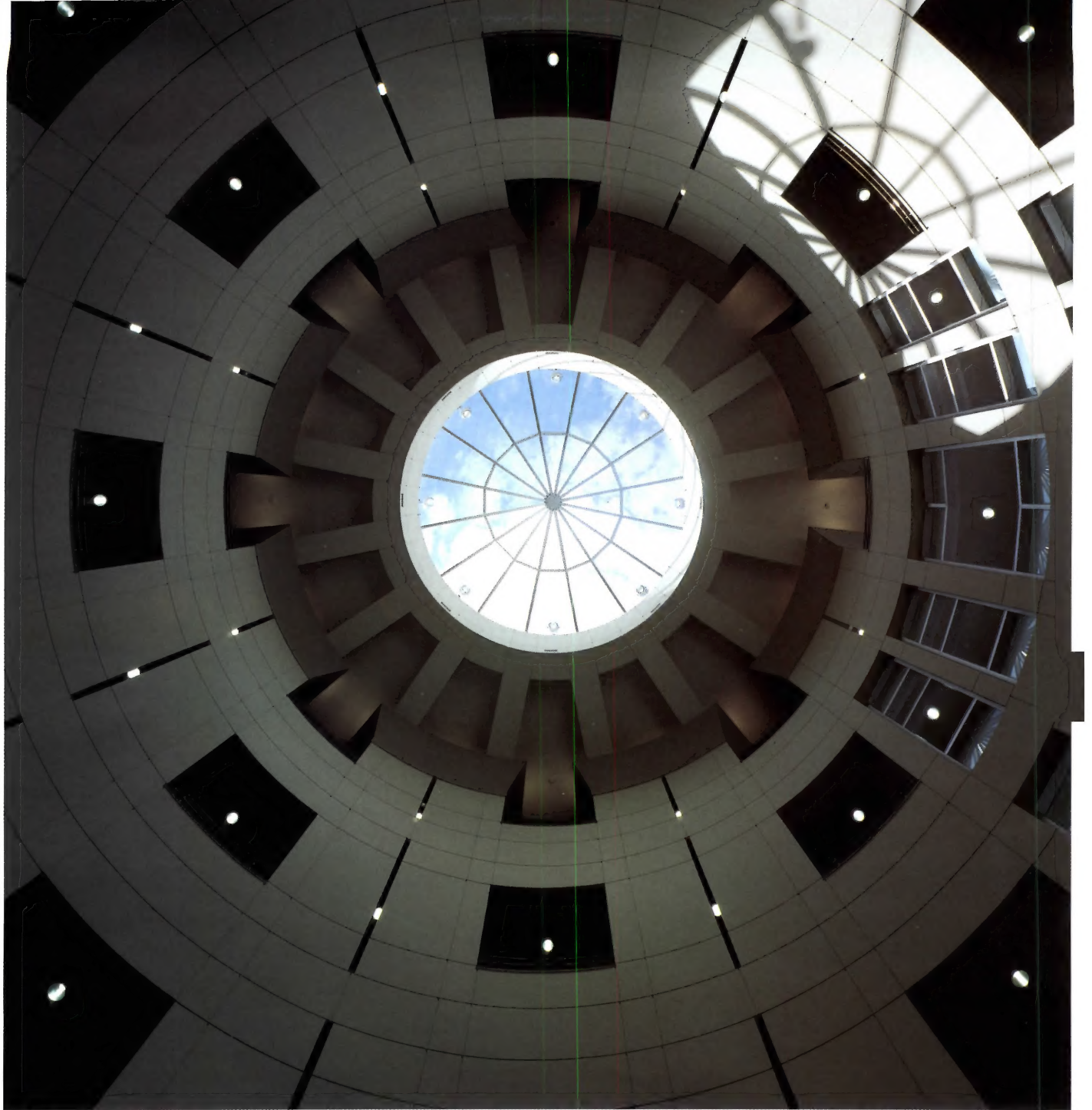
with black-and-tan granite insets laid in a pattern that represents a compass, a nod to the company's mission to report information from the four corners of the earth.

Unifying the building's floor plan, the rotunda provides for ease of movement through the facility and fosters integration of various departments throughout it.

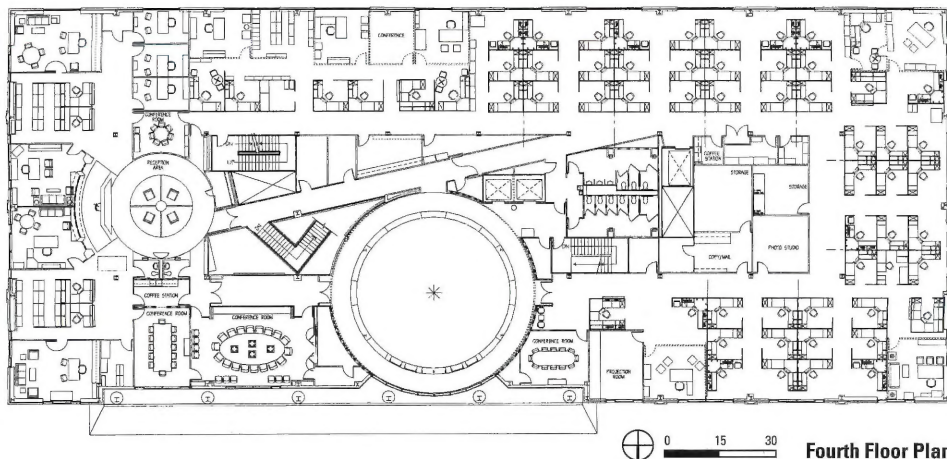
Communications systems including telephone and data were integrated into the systems furniture, all in support of the goal for a flexible solution. Space standards established by CMSS enable Media General's managers to allocate space efficiently while meeting the differing requirements of its employees.

Photos: Hoachlander Davis Photography





The dramatic lobby is a skylit rotunda that slices through all four floors of the office building.



0 15 30 Fourth Floor Plan





## For Nature's Sake

*Heilig-Meyers Headquarters • Rose Architects*

Completed in September of 1997, this 220,000-square-foot office building for furniture retailer Heilig-Meyers is the initial phase of a four building project in West Creek, an office park development in Goochland County. Located on 29 acres of rolling land that fronts a manmade lake, the building will someday be the core of a campus employing up to 1,400 people.

Heilig-Meyers, in addition to having a need for office space, requested amenities such as a full-service cafeteria, training rooms, outdoor terrace, sixth-floor executive suite, and a computer center that links the its 900 stores. The building also includes its own power plant.

When architect Ernie Rose, AIA, arrived on the scene, he found an undisturbed suburban site mostly covered with a 25-year growth of pines and small hardwoods. The most mature trees exist



**Proportions were carefully studied in designing the facade.**



Photos: John Henley



**Plans for high density development led to the design of a six-story building (left). Internal offices overlook the double-height reception lobby (above).**

in a small draw that runs through the center of the property. Adjacent to the site is a lake, a large expanse of sensitive wetlands, and a billion-dollar semiconductor plant for Motorola under construction.

Rose, principal of Rose Architects in Richmond, decided to retain large portions of the wooded area to screen the building from view. He placed the headquarters near the lake and tucked it into the trees away from the wetland. The choice to build six stories high grew out of a desire to make the future complex as dense as possible, preserving most of the natural setting. As planned, later additions will accommodate parking decks above the existing surface lots so that no more land is consumed for cars.

The corporation's desire for a simple floor plate, the immense volume of the building, and the knowledge that future buildings will be placed on the site led Rose to break down the building's scale by articulating the skin vertically and horizontally, recessing the executive floor, interrupting the brick masses with metal and glass, and designing deep-recessed windows to accentuate the shadow on the brick skin.



**Employees enjoy the use of an outdoor terrace that overlooks a lake.**





Photos: Prakash Patel

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## Industry in a New Age

*White Oak Semiconductor • IDC with Baskervill & Son*

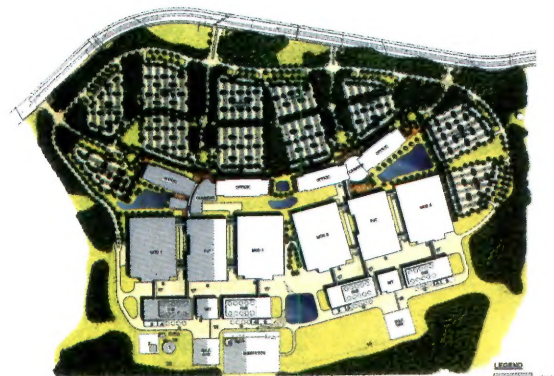
News of the White Oak project was met with excitement in Richmond's business community, but for the architects the challenge was great – to design and build one million square feet of high-tech manufacturing space in less than a year.

IDC, an Oregon-based architecture firm, set up a satellite office in Richmond to launch the job and teamed up with Baskervill & Son, an established Richmond firm. Their plan for the sprawling property in eastern Henrico County produced a called for a dense grouping of facilities that would comprise the \$1.5 billion micro-electronics manufacturing campus. This strategy was minimizes product flow and

circulation between buildings, while creating easy access to the employee cafeteria. The office portion of the six-building initial phase has a long, narrow floor plate to maximize daylighting and exterior views. Major buildings and the primary circulation spine overlook a scenic pond, built to retain stormwater runoff.

Nestled in a forest, the facility blends a confident expression of technology with sensitivity to aesthetics and worker well-being. Profiled metal panels reinforce the high-tech image while satisfying the constraints of a precise budget. On the building interior, light monochromatic colors were used to reference the importance of cleanliness in the facility, which incorporates Class 1 “clean rooms” for the manufacturing process. Primary colors were strategically applied inside the building to accent important interior features and visually reinforce the circulation patterns between the different buildings.

White Oak's technical accomplishments include an innovative long-span precast structural system, which facilitated the aggressive schedule. Other technical aspects include environmentally responsible features such as high-efficiency, computer-designed air handling systems and a rinse water recycling system to reduce long-term water consumption.



Shaded areas show built sections of planned campus (above). Textured metal panels lend interest to large expanses of wall (left).







The complex's main entrance is a curved glass wall that opens up the lobby space. As new buildings are added, bright yellow walls in the lobby are in keeping with a color scheme primary to the entire complex.





## Executive Privilege

*WinStar Communications, Inc. • DBI Architects*

Since 1996, DBI Architects of Washington, D.C., and Tysons Corner has designed 30 regional sales offices for WinStar Communications, a provider of telephone and Internet services. One recent assignment in Falls Church involved the design of an alternative work space for top executives and their support staff.

The intent was to create "touchdown" work spaces in an open environment for up to twelve top on-the-go executives. "They were moving toward openness in the company's overall office concept, so they wanted to do the same at the top," says Jennifer Klein, AIA, director of interior architecture at DBI. To show Klein what

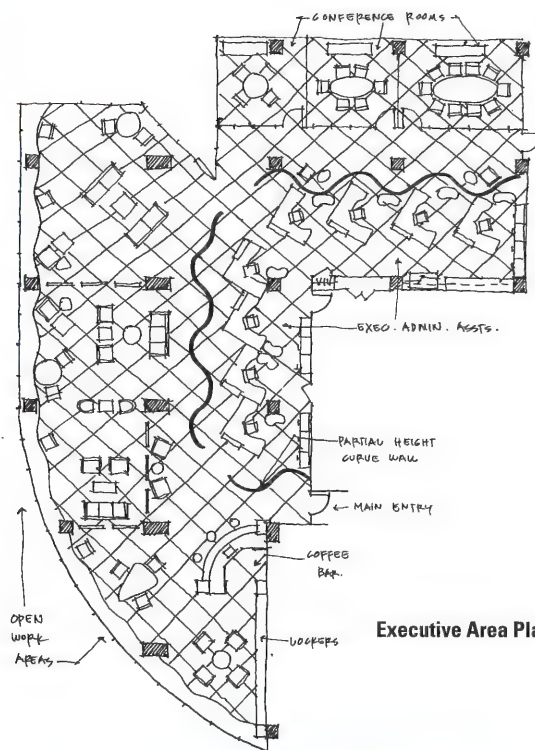
he had in mind, WinStar's chief operating officer took her to the tea room at the Ritz Carlton Hotel. "He wasn't interested in the same dark paneling, but he liked the comfortable seating arrangements and soft chairs," Klein recalls.

At WinStar, a jazzy coffee bar and locker area serve as the hub of the execu-





**Sales offices in Washington, D.C., rely on flexible, fast-assembled components.**



**Executive Area Plan Sketch**

**A coffee bar is the focus of the new executive work area (left). Desks and conference tables are available as needed (right) for a changing cast of company decision-makers.**



Photos: Prakash Patel

tive's open work area. DBI inserted a curved, partial-height wall to separate the free-flowing work space from the assistants' cubicles. Three conference rooms round out the 5,600-square-foot space. To maintain a small-scale feeling, the architects designed eight custom-glass panels framed with maple to use as room dividers. Shades

of beige and gray with aluminum, glass, and bird's-eye maple detailing establish a soothing color palette.

The executive spaces adjoin a larger network operations center that occupies the rest of the floor level. The operations center contains a conference room, data center, offices, and command center, where

regional telephone and Internet switch sites are monitored on large screens.

DBI's work on the company's sales offices produced a reusable set of design concepts, materials, and color schemes. This streamlined the process of building occupancy, enabling WinStar to get new offices up and running as quickly as possible.





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On the rear of the house (right), Gurney capitalized on the big view with large windows that overlook the pool and Intracoastal beyond.



# All's Right in Wrightsville

*By Sue Robinson*

A recent best-selling pop culture book admonishes us to focus on the big stuff. But the author of "Don't Sweat the Small Stuff" surely was no architect, at least not one of the artistic kind. For an architect, the details – devilish as they may be – are the sighs and whispers and winks of design.

Personality of place and quality construction show themselves in the small stuff, the details, the punctuation marks in the language of design. Thinking in just that way, architect Robert M. Gurney, AIA, does sweat the small stuff. Wonderfully so.

That preoccupation with detail rises immediately to the surface in a house Gurney completed for a couple in Wrightsville Beach, N.C. "When you're working on a new house you could forget about the details and how it goes together," says Gurney, who heads a small practice in Alexandria. As an architect, he



Seen from the water's edge, the house appears to have a more informal organization than it does.

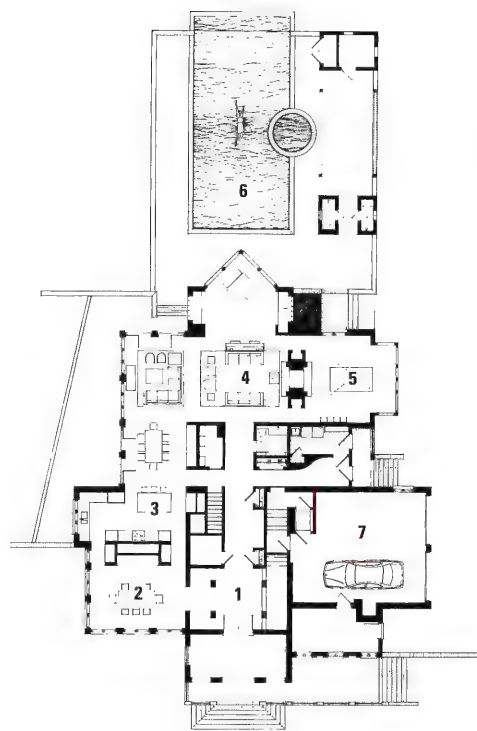


says, one really works on two levels. One is working on a new house, which gives designers the opportunity to manipulate light and volume. The other is working on small projects. "And because I work on many small projects where I have to rely on the detailing to carry the design, I learn from that and tend to respect the details in the bigger projects."

Imagine how easily one could get lost in the sea of decisions required to create 6,000 square feet of new space on a sliver of a lot that juts like a proscenium stage into watery realms – a pond on one side and the Intra-coastal Waterway on the other. "When the most important thing is the view, you could almost stop at that point."

But Gurney didn't. The fireplace surround has pieces of maple embedded in the granite. He dramatized the entry economically by having off-the-shelf divided light doors custom sandblasted into an abstract design featuring a ribbon swath and stacked and scattered squares. Its intent: to capture the idea of the waterway winding its way through the property.

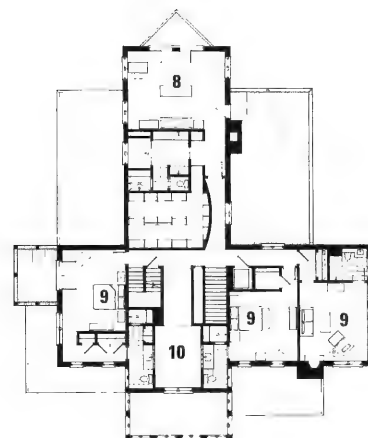
Squares appear as a motif throughout the building – puncturing through brick walls, forming the base for a glass-topped living room table, emerging in the windows



First Floor Plan



- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| 1 Entry       | 6 Pool           |
| 2 Dining      | 7 Garage         |
| 3 Kitchen     | 8 Master Bedroom |
| 4 Living Room | 9 Bedroom        |
| 5 Game Room   | 10 Open to Below |

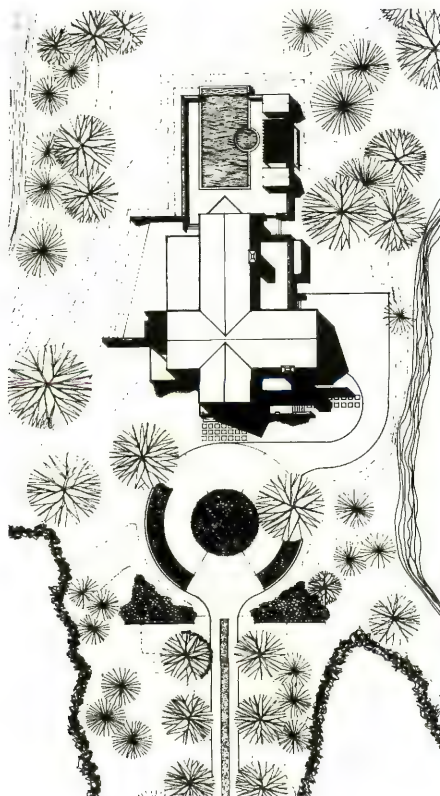


Second Floor Plan

and a checkerboard barstool. "All the cabinetry in the powder room and the billiards room is well thought-out, not just straight stock cabinetry," notes Gurney. His devotion to detail shows in the way the materials come together so that your eye is always moving. The

results, however, aren't busy. "It's almost more difficult to make things look very simple rather than do these spaces that rely on gobs and gobs of molding," he says.

In the details, Gurney respected the overriding ideas of the house. In the broader



The open plan allows for easy movement between the kitchen, dining area, and family room.



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**The living room's overscaled bay window  
draws the eye into the landscape.**

design scheme, he deferred to the neighbors. "I respected the existing fabric in the community while departing enough to serve my clients' tastes."

Gurney's patrons were Jane Hexter and her husband Peter, who owns a marketing firm in nearby Wilmington. The house is their year-round residence. According to Gurney, the Hexters wanted to build a house that leaned toward Modernism, although it sits in a community that, for the most part, favors tradition. Gurney's charge was to find a happy medium, while being certain to take advantage of the spectacular water views.

As important as the views, however, were considerations about the presence the house would have in the neighborhood. The Hexters' lot is at the end of the street, and the view from that dead end exerted a strong influence on the way Gurney dealt with the block and the rest of the community. "It was important that the street ended in a prominent fashion," he says. "Once I got people into the house, then I could take advantage of the views."

Gurney started by focusing on the center point of the existing cul-de-sac and, from there, extended an imaginary line through the entire site. This axis governed the alignment of the long, tree-lined driveway and the ultimate placement and design of the house, right down to the organization of traffic flow within the house.

From the cul-de-sac, the axis shoots down the driveway to a roundabout, through the front door and a dramatic shotgun entry, and terminates in a triangular bay at the back of the house, where the owners have situated a grand piano. From there, the view is focused through large windows to the swimming pool and, beyond, the Intracoastal.

In the pool's design, details make the

*(continued on page 35)*





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## SOUND MASKING SYSTEMS AND OPEN OFFICE PLANNING

### *The search for open office privacy.*

The purpose of electronic sound masking is understood by very few people. Some believe it to be an "acoustical vacuum cleaner", sucking up conversations and absorbing noise from loud office equipment. Others believe it is a vicious plot by management to control their minds. In actuality, masking's sole purpose is to introduce carefully controlled amounts of noise into the office environment, raising the level of ambient sound. The operating principles for sound masking are based on two simple concepts:

1. The higher the level of ambient sound in an office area, the less aware occupants will be of intruding speech and noise.
2. Our hearing is capable of discerning only the intrusive sounds that are louder in level than ambient background sound.

The design of a sound masking system requires a more stringent design layout than background music systems. To operate properly, the system must provide sufficient masking levels throughout the space without experiencing noticeable volume variations. Typically, the system should not vary by more than +/- 2dB at 4000 Hz between two locations. To achieve this level of consistency requires speakers with wide dispersion characteristics and good high frequency response.

When considering the placement of masking speakers, they should be located in the ceiling plenum to aid in their dispersion. The presence of the speakers should not be detectable from below while walking through the area. This uniformity is important if the occupants are to accept the masking as part of their homogenous environment.

For effective masking, the spectral content of the masking noise must be adjusted to approximate the spectral content of the intruding noise. The equalization curve normally used is similar to the NC-40 Contour Shape. This curve specifies both the level and spectral content of the sound.

Attempts to use the HVAC system as the sound masking system have generally been unsuccessful. The difficulty in adjusting its intensity in different areas and the

spectral content of the noise changing with the cooling and heating cycles represent only two of the many negatives that the buildings' mechanical systems present.

Music is occasionally used to provide sound masking. Music alone rarely provides acceptable performance; the transient and irregular nature of the music prevents it from providing the consistent background sound level required. Music may, however, be included with the normal sound masking system for a pleasing combination. When masking noise is combined with music or paging, it is important that the masking not be affected by page muting or local volume controls. If it is necessary to include local control of the music or page level, then either a separate system should be installed or dual voice-coil masking speakers used. If the latter approach is chosen, then the music and page may be applied to one voice coil with the local volume control, and the masking may operate uninterrupted on the other.

When adding masking to an occupied office, it is preferred that as much of the installation as possible be performed after normal work hours. After the system is installed, the noise level will be gradually raised over a period of time. This technique will prevent an abrupt, overnight, change in the office environment that would be noticeable to most occupants.

Two basic types of electronic sound masking systems are currently in use. The central system locates all electronic equipment in one or more cabinets and distributes the signal out to the speakers. The alternative is the self-contained, modular type, which includes all components in a small enclosure for mounting in the ceiling. Both systems contain the primary elements, noise generator, equalizer, mixer-preamp, amplifier, level controls and speakers.

Fred Coldwell  
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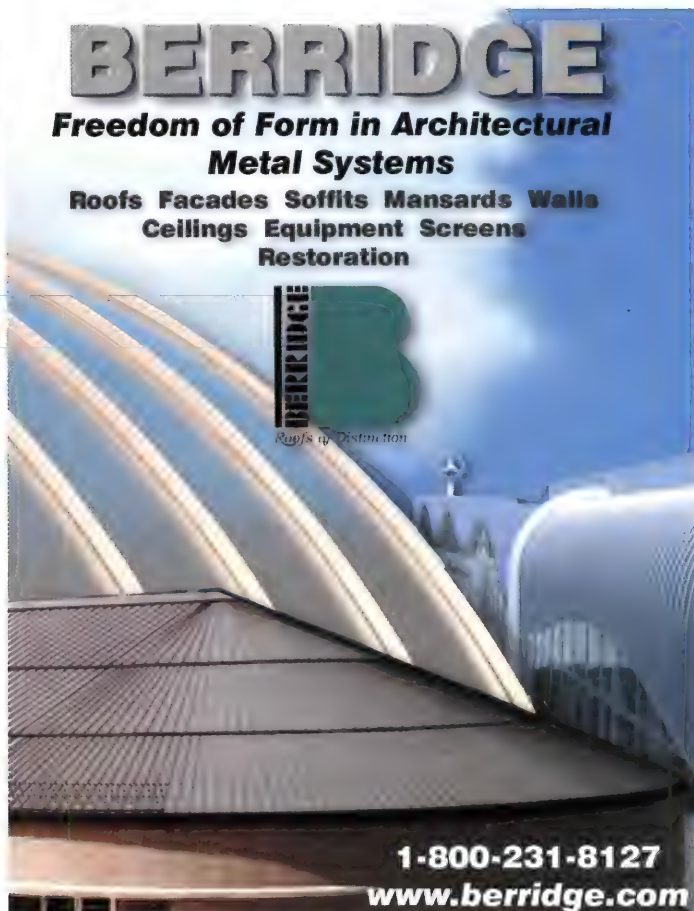
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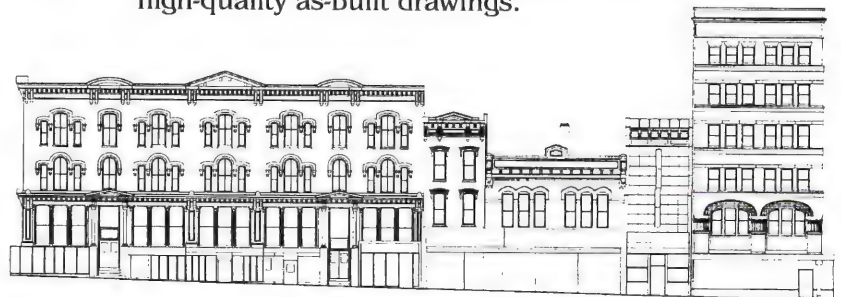
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By centering the residence on a long driveway, Gurney gave the house a formal quality too.

(continued from page 30)

experience again. Gurney's detailing of a disappearing edge on the swimming pool means that, when seen from the house, the water appears to continue into the nearby waterway in an unbroken panorama.

Struggling with a modern house in a traditional community, Gurney integrated traditional motifs and materials – white painted brick, tall chimneys, slate roof, and gable ends – with more up-to-date expressions. Those Modern interpretations include an absence of roof overhangs, crisp walls, and floor-to-ceiling windows without moldings. “At first glance, it seems to fit into this community comfortably, but when you look closely it is rooted in Modernism,” the architect says.

And just what have the neighbors in this golfing haven been saying? “We’ve heard really wonderful things,” says Gurney. One furniture manufacturer asked permission to use the house for a photographic layout. The owners also have been approached about featuring it in a movie.

Gurney also paid close attention to how people will live in the house, humbly diverting credit for the interiors to his design partner and wife, Therese Baron Gurney. “She definitely makes my projects look a whole lot better,” Gurney allows. “We work well together. She understands that the architecture matters. A lot of interior designers will come in and try to put their stamp on a project, but here the interiors become background to the architecture and, in this case, background to the views.”

The furnishings are comfortable, but at the same time they don't shout. Seating groups float in the space, because the furniture doesn't go up against the walls. Says Gurney: “It's a house that is very much organized around the views.”

Sue Robinson is a Richmond freelance writer.



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**Architect:** Baskervill & Son, Richmond  
**Project:** Stony Point Medical Complex

Built in 1995 as a 54,000 s.f. medical office building, the Stony Point Medical Complex is now being expanded to include oncology services. This 25,000 s.f., two-level addition houses an infusion room, linear accelerator, and exam rooms. Also included is a 273-space parking deck. Tel: 804-343-1010



**Architect:** Clark Nexsen, Architecture & Engineering, Norfolk  
**Project:** Twin Oaks Office Building

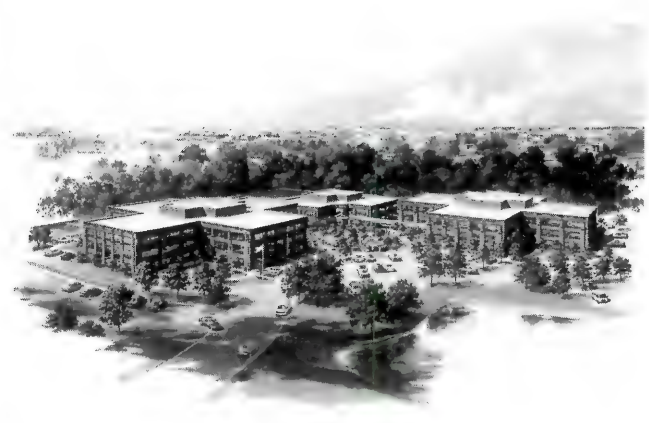
This 90,000 s.f. office building is constructed on a prominent site in Lake Wright Executive Center. The shell office building, clad with precast concrete and brick veneer, is four stories tall and will contain a two-story atrium lobby, whose floor will be finished in imported Italian marble. Tel: 757-455-5800

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**Architect:** SFCS, Inc., Roanoke  
**Project:** Carilion Health System Medical Office Building

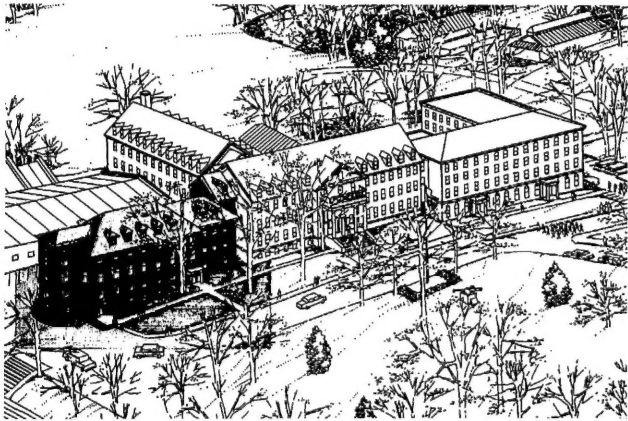
This new three-story, 66,000 s.f. medical office building will house outpatient imaging services, outpatient testing, lab, EKG, presurgical testing, and a pharmacy on the first floor. The upper two floors will be leased medical office space. The building will connect to a 450-car parking structure. Tel: 540-344-6664 / [www.sfcs.com](http://www.sfcs.com)



**Architect:** CMSS Architects, P.C., Virginia Beach  
**Project:** Capital One Administrative Complex

This project is a 25-acre corporate campus in Richmond's Innsbrook Corporate Center. More than 300,000 s.f. of operations space is divided among two office buildings and a separate training center/cafeteria. A landscaped courtyard is embraced by a loggia that connects the three facilities. Tel: 757-497-5060





**Architect:** Marcellus Wright Cox & Smith Architects, Richmond

**Project:** Restoration of Sanford Hall

Restoration of Sanford Hall, the oldest building on the Hargrave Military Academy campus, will provide updated and accessible housing, a technology classroom, and a multi-use convocation space. A stair tower will be added at one end and an elevator tower at the other. Tel: 804-780-9067

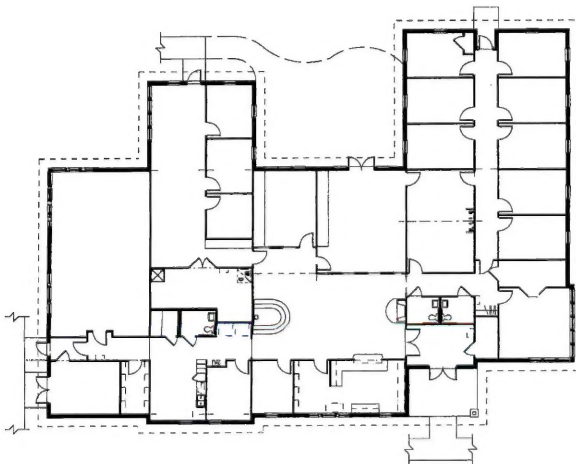
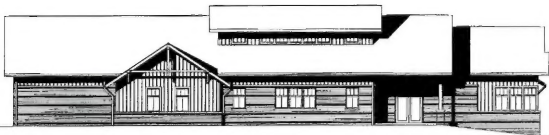


**Architect:** Odell Associates, Inc., Richmond

**Project:** VCU Sports Medicine Building

This 42,000 s.f. freestanding building will be two stories in height and sited to front Broad Street on VCU's academic campus. The building will house the MCV Sports Medicine Clinic, Department of Intercollegiate Athletics, and Student Health Services. Tel: 804-644-5941

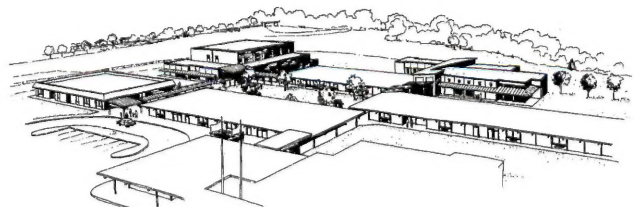
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**Architect:** The Troyer Group, Inc., Harrisonburg

**Project:** The Charles S. McNulty III Center for Child and Family Services

The new 8,000 s.f. building will house counseling and therapy services for children and families trying to overcome physical challenges, abuse, and addictions. The building's scale and materials support the goal of creating a non-institutional setting. Tel: 540-433-8016



**Architect:** Bond Comet Westmoreland + Hiner Architects, Richmond

**Project:** Addition/Renovation to Spotswood Elementary School

Additions to this Spotsylvania Co. school include multipurpose rooms, classrooms, a new media center, music rooms, and art rooms. Renovation of the existing media center will yield additional space. A network of steel canopies will provide covered walkways for the campus-style school. Tel: 804-788-4774





**Architect:** Dewberry & Davis, Richmond

**Project:** Peter Jefferson Place II

This 62,500 s.f. three-story office building in Charlottesville is designed to complement the city's historic architecture. The new structure, one of three awarded to Dewberry & Davis, reinterprets historic rhythms by utilizing traditional architectural elements. Contact Neil Bhatt. Tel: 804-643-8061

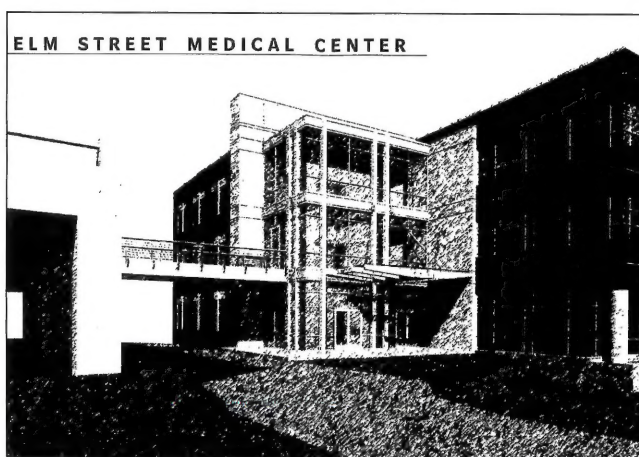


**Architect:** Mitchell/Matthews Architects, Charlottesville

**Project:** Dabney Grove, U. Va. Research Park at North Fork

Planned to honor the leadership and contributions of former U.Va. Rector Hover S. Dabney, Dabney Grove was designed to incorporate the last remaining stone chimneys of an original farmstead into a parklike pavilion at the University of Virginia's Research Park at North Fork. Tel: 804-979-5220

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**Architect:** Little & Associates Architects, Charlotte, N.C.

**Project:** Elm Street Medical Center

This project consists of a 30,000 s.f. medical office facility in Greensboro, N.C., with an adjacent parking deck. Two distinctive building volumes are separated by an extended wall, which serves as a backdrop to the building's atrium lobby and an upper-level pedestrian bridge. Tel: 704-525-6350



**Architect:** Hayes, Seay, Mattern and Mattern, Inc. (HSMM, Inc.), Roanoke

**Project:** Shenandoah Hotel Building Renovation

The renovation will restore the 27,000 s.f. historic building's exterior and continue its "residential" heritage by creating housing for Mill Mountain Theatre's touring performers. It will also provide classroom and rehearsal space and prime ground-floor retail space in downtown Roanoke. Tel: 540-857-3100

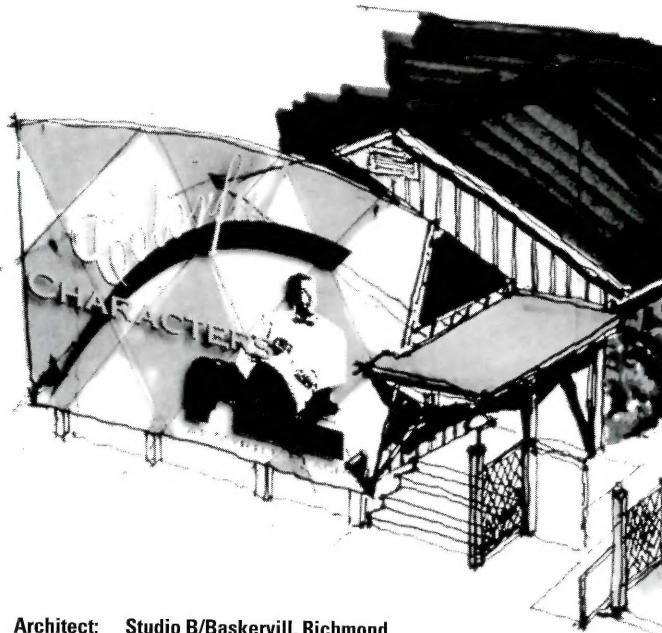




**Architect:** SMBW Architects, Richmond

**Project:** Virginia Commonwealth University student housing

A 400-bed housing complex for V.C.U. students will further define the University's northern edge on a major commercial street while mitigating the scale of a residential neighborhood. Interior courtyards will provide communal space that is central to the college experience. Tel: 804-782-2115

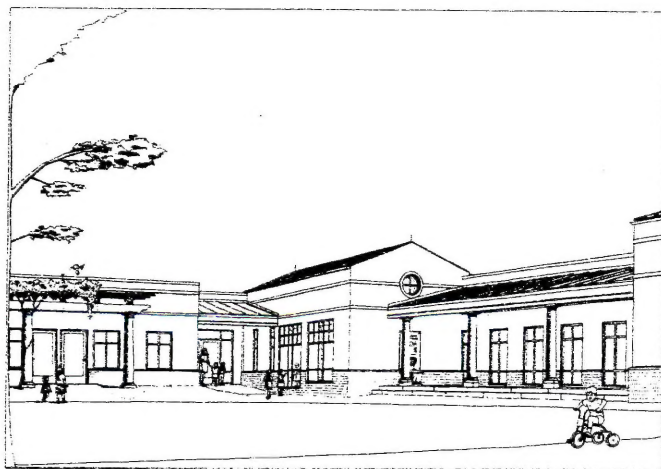


**Architect:** Studio B/Baskervill, Richmond

**Project:** Colorful Characters Restaurant

This 5,400 s.f. restaurant renovation and addition sports a new interior reminiscent of the fifties glamour during its heyday. A new deck addition wraps around existing trees and harkens to the feel of the Hollywood bungalow hideaway. Tel: 804-343-1010

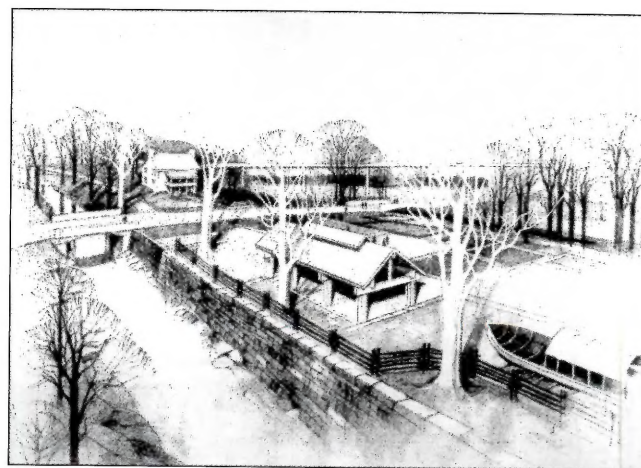
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**Architect:** Rose Architects, P.C., Richmond

**Project:** Mary Tyler McClenahan Childcare Center

This 13,000 s.f. facility creates a strong connection between the classrooms and the landscape. Daylighting technology provides an exceptional developmental environment. Located in the Richmond Better Housing Coalition's community at Winchester Greens, the center will open in January 2000. Tel: 804-780-1801



**Architect:** Carlton Abbott and Partners, P.C., Williamsburg

**Project:** Master Plan for Jordan's Point Park

The city of Lexington has undertaken to develop a master plan for VMI Island, which was the historic waterfront located on the Maury River during the 19th century. The plan envisions restoration of the stone walls that comprise the city dock and canal structures. Tel: 757-220-1095



## ! Taking Note

One day in 1995, Marcel Desaulniers and John Curtis walked through an ordinary cottage with architect Robert Magoon, AIA. They shared their hopes of turning the building into a test kitchen, studio, and office for Desaulniers, a noted chef and author of many cookbooks, including the popular *Death by Chocolate*. Desaulniers and Curtis, co-owners of The Trellis restaurant in Williamsburg, wondered aloud if Magoon could make something of the tiny house.

Magoon, principal of Magoon & Associates in Williamsburg, was soon at

work on Ganache Hill, a retreat from the busy restaurant for Desaulniers, who often found himself escaping to his home to work. "He told me of visiting Julia Child in her home when they

were filming a TV show," Magoon recalls. "We talked about the difficulty of positioning cameras, lights, and people in a residential space."

To meet the chef's needs, Magoon deleted the floor-ceiling assembly on one side of the central hall and stair, creating an overlook on the upstairs landing where a camera can be positioned. The one-and-a-half-story space provides ample room for cameras, lights, and film crews.

A well-traveled road near the building also raised concerns about traffic noise interrupting filming sessions, so sound deadening techniques were employed when rebuilding the exterior walls. Opposite the kitchen, Magoon created intimate spaces for dining events and writing. Above them is a garret-style office for Desaulniers.

On the exterior, Magoon focused his attention on finish materials and the front and rear porches, one of which had been enclosed years earlier. He refitted it with a prep kitchen, toilet room, and entry. Now a new wheelchair ramp winds through the front garden with a small pergola. Says Magoon: "Instead of apologizing for the cottage style, we decided to enhance this strength of the original building."

— Vernon Mays

## Under the Bright Lights' Glare



Photos: Robert Magoon (building) / Chuck Savage (Desaulniers)



One side of the cottage was converted into an airy studio (above). Now the modest house (left) provides exactly the space needed by Desaulniers (inset photo).